

# YOUTH INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Patrician Youth Centre,  
Downpatrick, County Down

Report of an inspection in  
December 2019



The Education and Training Inspectorate  
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education  
Department for the Economy  
and other commissioning Departments

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## 1. Context

Patrician voluntary youth centre has operated in Downpatrick since 1981 and is one of fourteen purpose built youth centres built by the diocese of Down and Connor. There is a senior youth worker who is supported by a full-time centre-based worker and a full-time Peace IV funded youth worker. The senior youth worker also manages and supports a voluntary part-time youth centre, Saint Colmcille's, in the Ballymote area. There are 20 part-time staff who provide a wide range of services and activities on five evenings and five days a week and two Saturdays a month. There was an average membership of over 1000 young people over the last three years with an average session attendance of 61 during the inspection.

## 2. Views of parents and staff

The parents who spoke with members of the inspection team value highly the communication skills and self-confidence that their children are developing, in particular those with autism. The parents informed the inspection team that as a result of attending the centre their young people were learning the necessary skills, including self-confidence and resilience, to help them cope better with life situations.

## 3. Focus of the inspection

The inspection focused on:

- the outcomes for the young people;
- the quality of the provision; and
- the quality of leadership and management.

## 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Outstanding
<b>Quality of provision</b>	Outstanding
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Outstanding

## 5. Outcomes for learners

The young people demonstrate a clear understanding of their learning, they take the opportunities provided for them and enhance their personal and social development skills through the many varied programmes on offer, including appropriate accredited and non-accredited courses. According to the figures supplied by the organisation almost 350 young people have attended accredited and non-accredited courses; in the majority of these the retention and success rate is over 85%. The qualifications are relevant and support the young peoples' progression through life, they include: high level talking and listening skills, examining options, planning activities, building consensus and reflecting on outcomes.

There are a wide-range of programmes that are matched well to the increasing complex needs, interests and aspirations of the young people and the community. The centre reacts positively to the identified needs and interests of individuals and groups of young people through ongoing discussions, questionnaires and feedback from parents and the local community. The consistent and at times innovative youth work practice has resulted in the

young people developing a new set of skills to support and promote healthy living, well-being and training. The variety of programmes included, the drama club, the Monday evening club for young people with autism and a well-structured junior club. This is just a sample of the many sessions observed where the young people are developing important life skills as they participate actively with confidence within a safe environment.

The young people are clear about the progression routes to leadership through the various age appropriate sections of the centre. As they progress through the centre, they develop the necessary personal and social development skills through their support for one another in an environment that promotes a culture of respect and understanding. The young people build informed opinions on a range of contemporary issues, listen respectfully to one another and moderate their views in response to the contributions of others.

## **6. Quality of provision**

The curriculum provided by the centre is of a high quality and the staff respond well to the identified needs included in the service level agreement that is negotiated with the Education Authority. The annual needs assessment informs the planning for a wide and varied curriculum and caters for young people who have different needs and interests. For example, there is a strong focus on inclusion where the young people with different needs and abilities are encouraged to participate actively in the programmes while contributing to raising standards and closing the performance gap between the highest and lowest achieving young people.

The excellent working relationships throughout the centre, reflect strongly the ethos and shared values of trust and respect for one another other. The staff design skilfully programmes which develop the young people's positive attitudes including respecting others, celebrating difference and being part of a vibrant community. The staff are particularly adept at identifying areas where further understanding can be explored to deepen the young people's learning and extend their thinking skills through effective one-to-one and small group work. The cohesive team, including the specialist youth workers, volunteers and part-time paid staff, are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities during each evening, they support one another very well.

The quality of the sessions observed ranged from good to outstanding, with almost all evaluated as very good. The young people engage enthusiastically in the sessions and demonstrate very high levels of focus, motivation and enjoyment. In the most effective practice, the youth workers comprehensively plan programmes which focus on quality learning experiences and the young people develop high level inter-personal skills, understand how actions and words affect others and focus on key points, sustain attention and persist with more difficult tasks. As a result of the consistent, dedicated and highly skilful work of the youth workers, volunteers and specialist support workers, the young people avail of co-ordinated activities to build confidence, gain a wide range of new skills and make connections between their learning in different contexts.

The very good leadership pathways provide the young people with opportunity to propose, organise and evaluate their own programmes. They are confident that their contributions will lead to changes in the activities and planned outcomes, which supports well the development of their leadership skills. The young people respond with high levels of motivation and enthusiasm to the appropriate and increasingly challenging leadership opportunities. The progression routes include the 'ivolunteer' and 'ileader' programmes that are preparing the young people for appropriate leadership roles.

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the organisation's approach to the care and welfare of the young people impacts positively on learning, youth work and outcomes for learners. The high expectations of respectful behaviour are discussed, understood and maintained with the members of the centre, visitors and the wider community.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The strategic leadership of the centre provides the young people and the staff with a clear vision and understanding of effective youth work that informs planning and leads to high quality provision. The annual service level agreement includes an action plan which contains achievable and measurable targets which are understood by staff and management through a process of continuous staff development. The 'Priorities for Youth' policy is reflected well in all of the youth work action plans with particular attention given to the overarching goals of raising standards for all, closing the performance gap and increasing access and equality. The management committee are well-led by the expertise of the senior youth worker, they give up their time freely and demonstrate a solid commitment to the centre through, attending events, regular formal and informal meetings. While the management committee carry out their management function well, going forward it is important that they formalise and minute some of the many meetings they have with key staff.

A key strength of the centre is the highly effective links and partnerships that add significant scope to the centre's aims and objectives but more importantly are adding value to the youth service delivery in the area. For example, the links with the Down family hub enable those young people who present with complex issues to access the available youth and other services. The staff know the young people and their families well and are able to provide them with information a range of service providers who in turn are able to respond appropriately and in a timely fashion. The partnership with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, is providing a vital link with parents and with the community. The young people respond well to the youth services provided in the well-established Monday evening club. Other important partnerships include the link worker for the young people from Syria and their families and the partnership with Youth Action which provides the Amplify project<sup>1</sup>. The focus on mental health is an important part of the overall action planning process and very good use is made of external providers including the FLARE<sup>2</sup> project. Sensitive awareness of the young people's needs, very effective inter-agency working and highly skilful deployment of resources are key features of this outstanding work.

There are also substantial and effective links with the nearby primary school, who use the centre during school time as well as the effective after school provision. The centre provides structured activities including Mini-Medics delivered with external providers, as well as homework support for literacy and numeracy. The excellent links with a local post-primary school is providing the year 10 and sixth-form pupils with a range of accredited and non-accredited work that is enhancing their learning, making important links with the formal curriculum.

The experienced staff team are well-led by the senior youth worker, she provides strategic leadership at all levels. While there is a clear understanding of the role of self-evaluation leading to improvement, the part-time staff are aware of the need to develop further the methods used to evaluate the impact of their work with the young people through a workable process that informs continuous improvement planning.

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<sup>1</sup> Amplify Youth is a project supported by the European Union's Peace IV Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

<sup>2</sup> FLARE (Facilitating Life And Resilience Education project) is a positive mental health programme provided by Education Authority, in partnership with Public Health Agency.

## **8. Safeguarding**

Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements for safeguarding young people reflect the guidance from the Department of Education. The young people report that they feel safe in the organisation and that they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or welfare.

## **9. Overall effectiveness**

Patrician youth centre has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.

APPENDIX A

Statistical data

Table 1: Total Membership

Age group	4-8		9-13		14-18		19-21		Outreach/ Detached		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
2016/17	122	128	251	267	140	191	5	*	45	60	1213
2017/18	127	130	256	252	155	212	5	6	57	63	1263
2018/19	90	95	195	105	65	101	5	5	81	102	844
2019/20	70	90	155	110	56	60	*	7	150	164	866

**Source:** data as held by the organisation.

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

**Inspection methodology and evidence base**

The ETI's Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework is available on the ETI website at [The Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework \(ISEF\): Youth](#)

Inspectors observed youth work sessions and also held focus group discussions with the young people. The inspectors held discussions with a small number of parents, representatives of the management committee, staff and other stakeholders. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised the youth workers' planning and the organisation's self-evaluation reports. The inspectors evaluated the organisation's arrangements for safeguarding young people.

## Reporting terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

### Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75% - 90%
A majority	-	50% - 74%
A significant minority	-	30% - 49%
A minority	-	10% - 29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

### Performance levels

The ETI use the following performance levels when reporting on outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

### Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the organisation:

The organisation has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the organisation sustains improvement.
The organisation needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The organisation needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all the learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the organisation's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

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